

REMARKS

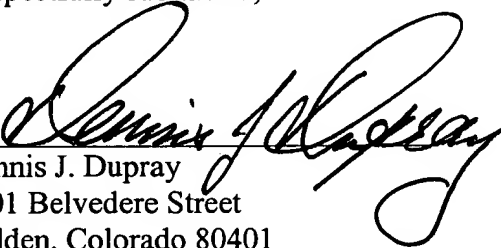
Applicants very much appreciate the Examiner's patience in the prosecution of the present application. Applicants believe they have now found and disclosed virtually all pertinent prior art, and accordingly hope that this will be the last amendment to the claims. Thus, Applicants are hopeful that the present application can now go promptly to issuance.

All pending claims were allowed in the previous Office Action. However, Applicants have herein substantially amended the pending claims. In particular, Applicants have reduced the total number of pending claims, and reduced the total number of independent claims. Additionally, Applicants have amended the claims to correct errors therein. Applicants have in some cases also broadened and/or narrowed portions of certain claims to more clearly claim what Applicants believe is patentable.

There is one new independent claim presented in this Preliminary Amendment, Claim 412. However four independent claims have been cancelled; i.e., Claims 100, 101, 103, and 117. It is believed that new Claim 412 is patentable.

It is believed that no fees are due with this transmittal. However, in the event that additional fees are due, it is requested that the undersigned Applicant be contacted as soon as possible by phone.

Respectfully submitted,

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